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ABSTRACT

This paper shares the contribution of adolescent development research to service learning research with the goal of strengthening service learning. The paper discusses four areas of research on adolescent development and considers three implications for service learning program development and research. It discusses in detail the following research areas: the needs of adolescents; adolescents' struggle for control over their lives; teenagers' moral development; and variables that make one teenager different from another (such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status). The paper outlines implications for service learning program development and research: (1) the tasks of adolescence provide a guide for understanding service learning within the framework of adolescence; (2) service learning programs and research can explore the developmental stages of the teenage years to define stages of service involvement; and (3) adolescence is a period of change and struggle. Contains 6 figures and 24 references. (BT)

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by

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Young people bring many strengths and useful experiences to the tasks of adolescence: seemingly limitless energy, great curiosity about the world, an intense desire to learn skills, and a trusting attitude.
-Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs (1992, p. 9)

You kiddin' me? I'm into a lot of things-girls, parties, sex, bein' with my friends, ya know? Sure, my mom's buggin' me I gotta do this 'n' that-do better in this, pay attention at school, and that. But my dad's the worst, of course. What do I think about? What CDs I wanna buy, tapes I wanna get, places I wanna hang out at. Yeah, sometimes I think about school. Ya know, that's scary. School is tough for me; I have to work hard. Some of them teachers just seem to have it in for me, I don't know. volunteer service I don't think about volunteering. It's not part of my life.
-Luis, tenth grade

Few adolescents think about volunteer service. They have other priorities in life. This doesn't mean they're not interested in or concerned about community issues and being active in the community . It simply reflects reality for most adolescents.

Luis, a tenth grader, puts it well when he says: "I don't know, volunteering? I don't think about bein' a volunteer. It's not part of my life." Even so, today's teenagers are tomorrow's community leaders. Sometimes it is difficult to picture teenagers as future community leaders and members. However, they will be.

Thinking about that reality, my task is to share the contributions of adolescent development research to service learning research with the goal of strengthening service learning. I am going to discuss four areas of research on adolescent development and share three implications for service learning program development and research.

First is the research on the needs of adolescents. Adolescence is a time of change and transition, usually encompassing the ages of ten to nineteen, the second decade of a person's life. Individuals during this time exhibit tremendous diversity in their physical development, maturity levels, behavior, and understanding of the world and of themselves. Because adolescents' needs, characteristics, and tasks alter drastically during this ten-year period, it is often broken into two parts: early (ten to fourteen) and late adolescence (fifteen to nineteen). Figures 1.1 and 1.2 highlight specific needs of early and

late adolescence. These needs reflect the primary tasks of adolescence, through which individuals develop a sense of who they are and how they view their world. Adolescents' idealism, quest for independence, and identity formation are critical to this process and to service learning.

Idealism

Adolescents are idealists. Idealism comes from their emerging ability to think about their expanded world. With abstract reasoning, they also develop the capability to envision possible solutions to social problems (untempered by actual experience). They conceive notions of ideal families, ideal schools, ideal religious institutions, and ideal societies; they may rebel against the imperfect ones they see around them. The young adolescent cannot understand why the rest of the world does not accept her idealistic solutions to social, economic, and sociological problems (Muuss, 1980). They may become angry and express unwillingness to accept reality; or, as is frequently the case, they may ally themselves with underdogs or those they see as less fortunate than themselves. Although this behavior is sometimes frustrating to adults who must combat adolescent passion, one researcher points out that "active imagination and the dreaming of ideals are not wasteful activities ... but can be a constructive part of everyone's life, making for the improvement of human functioning in a socially meaningful way" (Menge, 1982, p. 419).

This idealism continues through late adolescence, often taking the form of social activism. Many adolescents become involved in social, political, or religious causes, giving them an opportunity to explore their ideals and gain experience in the real world.

Idealism begins to diminish near the end of late adolescence. This is a result of increased cognitive capabilities and exposure to the ideas and beliefs of others. Late adolescents move beyond abstract reasoning to the formulation of a set of values, an ethical system that guides their behavior. They also begin to view other perspectives as separate from their own. As they gain more experience at work or in college, their frame of reference is modified by exposure to the conflicting or confirming views of others (Cobb, 1992).

Quest for Independence

The quest for independence and autonomy plays a powerful role during early adolescence. The emergence of self-understanding and self-reflection allows young people to begin to differentiate themselves from their parents and teachers, and instead compare themselves with their peers. Juhasz (1982) noted that during this stage, adolescents begin to seek identities separate from their parents and try to somehow make a difference in a wider social perspective. At the same time, they remain quite aware of their dependence. This duality often creates both internal and external conflict. Adolescents expend considerable energy moving toward greater control over their lives and increased freedom from authority, while at the same time trying to hold on to the benefits and security of childhood (Thornburg, 1983).

As adolescents grow older, they make more decisions for themselves, and the number of decisions they make with parents and teachers decreases. The types of decisions being made and the people responsible for those decisions are the central issues of independence in late adolescence. Who to spend time with; what classes to take; and when to study, do chores, and work are examples of daily decisions adolescents make. Although these decisions appear to be trivial, they are essential in the adolescent's process of separating from his parents so that he can become his own person. Living with the consequences of previous decisions helps adolescents successfully resolve later decisions. As older adolescents

become increasingly confident in their ability to make decisions, they begin to feel that they are in charge of their lives (Cobb, 1992).

Identity Formation

Early adolescence is a critical period for identity formation. Who they are and how they fit into the world are defining issues for ten-to-fourteen-year-olds. It is during this stage of development that individuals begin to establish and clarify a social conscience and work toward learning socially responsible behavior (Havighurst, 1972; Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977). Erikson (1980) indicated that during the early stages of this period (from ten to twelve years of age), individuals define themselves by what they can do and by the skills they possess. As individuals progress through this stage (from twelve to fifteen), they begin to clarify their role in their world (in school and the local community) and define and refine their individuality. They look for role models and heroes and try to integrate aspects of those ideals into their own value systems (George and Alexander, 1993).

The social hierarchy of the school and community becomes immensely important during this stage of a person's life. Teachers continue to play an important role in affirming a sense of competence and role expectations for individuals.

Identity formation continues in late adolescence and does not fully emerge until early adulthood, although most of the process is completed during adolescence. By their midteens (fifteen to seventeen), adolescents' sense of self includes who they have been, as well as who they hope to become. They define themselves more in terms of their intentions-what they would like to do-than by what they have actually done. As their ability to think abstractly develops, older adolescents can reflect on past behaviors and plan for the future (Cobb, 1992).

Identity formation is the culmination of many aspects of the self. Erikson (1968) views the formation of identity as making decisions about occupational, political, religious, and gender roles. Marcia (1980, 1988) writes of identity as an organization of beliefs, attitudes, habits, and motives into a continuing personal history. He believes that adolescents who manage to establish their identity explore more options, whether they be personal or vocational opportunities. These adolescents tend to be more tolerant of individual differences, allowing the same freedom of self-definition in others as they do in themselves.

Idealism, quest for independence, and identity formation can serve as the foundation of service learning for the adolescence year. How service learning addresses these needs will contribute to the effectiveness of service learning with teenagers.

The second area of research relates to adolescents' struggle for control over their lives Adolescents struggle to gain a sense of control over their lives. Rotter's concept of locus of control (1954) is the seminal research in this area. Locus of control deals with where people locate responsibility for success and failure: inside or outside of themselves. As shown in Figure 1.3, locus of control captures the distinction between self-determination and control by others. For example, some people have an internal locus of control and so believe that they are responsible for their own fates. They like to work in situations where skill and effort can lead to success. Other people have an external locus of control, generally believing that people and forces outside of

themselves control their fate. These individuals prefer to work in situations where luck determines the outcome of their lives.

Locus of control can be influenced by the behavior of others. Discrimination against women, people of color, and individuals with special needs can affect these individuals' perceptions of their own ability to control their lives. If people feel that they are not in control of their own lives, their self-esteem is likely to be diminished.

Ted, for instance, is a fifteen-year-old boy who has an external locus of control. He believes he has no control over what the future may bring. He thinks that no matter what he does, nothing will change for him unless fate or someone more powerful than himself comes along to make that difference. Ted doesn't participate in any school or community activities. He goes home after school and spends the better part of his time watching television.

Another adolescent, Tammy, is on the other end of the spectrum. She believes that she has the power to change all things by how she behaves. She is involved in many activities and is continually placed in leadership positions.

These are examples of opposite extremes. They are two very dissimilar individuals who are not differentiated by intelligence, socioeconomic status, race, or any other common way in which we identify people, but rather by locus of control.

In many ways, it is a mystery why some young people switch from an external locus of control in childhood to a more internal locus of control as they pass through adolescence. Research has found that an internal locus of control is correlated with many socially desirable variables, such as taking responsibility for one's own actions, being independent, exhibiting greater self-control, and staying in school (Lefcourt, 1966). Studies have shown (Chubb and Fertman, 1992) that locus of control is directly related to an individual's sense of belonging to his family. When an individual perceives his family as warm and inclusive, his internal locus of control is strengthened. When the opposite is true, an individual perceives his family as cold and detached, and his external locus of control is strengthened.

In making service learning meaningful to students we need to think about how to impact teenagers' locus of control. How can service learning place an adolescent in charge of his or her life. Many adolescents don't feel that they are in charge of their lives, and getting older doesn't necessarily change this perception. Therefore, it is critical throughout the service learning process to help adolescents feel that they are in control and are able to make decisions that will influence their own lives and the lives of others.

The third area of research on adolescents which is meaningful for service learning relates to teenagers' moral development. Working with adolescents in regard to ethics and social responsibility can be quite challenging. Most teens want to do the right thing, but they are frequently not sure what the right thing is. Especially with television glorifying violence, and with drugs and alcohol the popular means of pursuing fame and fortune, concepts such as family and community are being transformed, making distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad ever more blurred.

One useful source for understanding how adolescents develop their sense of right and wrong is the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (1963, 1975, 1981). He suggests that adolescents pass through a sequence of stages of judgment about right and

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wrong. We have divided moral reasoning development into three levels, as shown in Figure 1.4.

Kohlberg evaluated the moral reasoning of adolescents by presenting them with moral dilemmas, hypothetical situations in which people had to make difficult decisions. Study participants were asked what they thought the person caught in the dilemma should do, and they were asked to explain their answers. In these situations there were no obvious answers; no action would provide a complete solution. By the answers they gave, Kohlberg was able to gain insight into the development of adolescents' moral reasoning.

Moral reasoning is related to both cognitive and emotional development. Abstract thinking becomes increasingly important in the higher stages of moral development, as adolescents move away from decisions based on absolute rules and toward decisions based on such principles as justice and mercy. The ability to see another's perspective and to imagine alternatives to existing laws and rules also affects judgments at the higher stages of development.

Kohlberg's work highlights the fact that the development of moral reasoning is a process. This process takes place over time, with periods of new learning and relearning.

Carol Gilligan's (1990) work on the subject of girls' ethics and morality adds an dimension to the theory of moral development. Gilligan's work suggested to us three levels of moral development (see Figure 1.5). At the first level, the individual asks what is best for herself when making decisions. At the second level, she asks, "Am I doing what others expect of me?" At the third, the individual considers herself and others at once. Gilligan's work is significant in that she traces gender differences in moral reasoning to different ways of viewing the self. Females define themselves in relation to others; from this comes a sense of responsibility of one person for another. Males, on the other hand, define themselves as separate from others; this assumption of separation highlights the need for rules to regulate the actions of one person with respect to another (Woolfolk, 1995, p. 83.)

Gilligan found that females adopt an ethic of care. They think of morality in terms of their responsibility to others and are therefore concerned with doing something to meet the needs of others. This is different from males, who tend to think of responsibility as not doing something that would infringe on the rights of others (Woolfolk, 1995, p. 83).

Helping adolescents understand the concept of morality in terms of influencing others is important, therefore requiring constant attention to ethics as part of service learning.

The final area of research on adolescents that is important to consider are variables that make one teenager different from another. Three major variables frequently explored by researchers are gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Gender was already noted above as differentiating boys and girls in issues related to moral development. It is important to note that all teenagers are expected to be responsible, make decisions, plan for the future, and generally be more mature than children. In certain ways, however, the roles of males and females in our society differ. For example, the dominant culture teaches boys at an early age that to be successful they must be strong, aggressive, competitive, and ambitious. Girls are given a variation of this message, wherein the same qualities are desirable but have limitations. Within

these stereotypes of girl and boy behavior service is more valued for girls than boys.

Ricardo Garcia (1991) compares culture to an iceberg. One-third of the iceberg is visible; the rest is hidden and unknown. Adolescents have been raised in cultures that have given them many messages about service: what it is, who gives, who receives, etc. Some cultural messages are overt; for example, many Vietnamese parents expect their children to work hard and excel in school. Other cultural messages are covert: "like most girls, black girls are raised to assume the traditional female role of nurturing and child care, but they are also encouraged to be strong and self-sufficient and to expect to work outside the home-as have generations of black women before them" (Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan, 1995, p. 43).

The ability and motivation to participate in service are strongly tied to the cultural environments in which children grow up. The more dominant the culture in which the child is raised, the more strongly tied he or she will be to the mores of that culture. Those raised in a multicultural environment are more likely to have varying points of view.

Socioeconomic status is a term used to refer to degrees of wealth, power, and prestige. Socioeconomic status is a powerful force in the lives of teenagers. Poverty, health problems, and school failure are all highly correlated to an adolescent's socioeconomic status. This one factor can overpower other differences such as ethnicity and gender. For example, upper-class Anglo-Europeans, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans typically find that they have much more in common with each other than with lower-class individuals from their own ethnic groups (Woolfolk, 1995). The consequence of this phenomenon is that we commonly see differences in expectations of and attitudes toward service among adolescents from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Often the message to teenagers who live in poverty is that they don't do service. This is a dangerous and damaging attitude.

In conclusion the work on the needs of adolescents as well as the work of Rotter, Kohlberg, and Gilligan deepens our appreciation of life as an adolescent. It provides us with some understanding of what motivates adolescents and determines the sense of control they have over their lives. It also shows us how adolescents develop their sense of right and wrong. Furthermore, research on gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status differences substantiates their potential impact adolescents' development. A lot happens during adolescence, and the research help us frame the teenage years. The theoretical framework gives us an idea of what to expect when working to develop and research service learning to reflect the adolescent experience.

Implications of adolescent development research for service learning program development and research.

Discussion of the adolescent development research yields three implications for service learning program development and research(Figure 1.6).

First, the tasks of adolescence provide a guide for understanding service learning within the framework of adolescence. It highlights the developmental struggles that teenagers face as they answer the questions "Who am I?" and "How do I fit in?" To be meaningful to adolescents, service must consider their idealism, quest for independence, and identity formation. Gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status differences need to be addressed. Service learning within the framework of adolescents' needs can be a creative and useful vehicle

for involving teens and helping them to make a difference. It focuses on providing possible solutions for the issues and problems that adolescents find important. Service can give adolescents a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Service learning programs and research can explore and support how service methodology can best meet the needs of adolescents.

Second, service learning programs and research can explore the developmental stages of the teenage years to define stages of service involvement. The stages of service involvement would be sequential but fluid. Individuals may move from one stage to the next, only to return to the previous stage when they encounter a new situation. Following a model suggest by vanLinden and Fertman (1998) Stage One would focus on initial awareness of one's interest and motivation to service. In Stage Two, the adolesents expand and strengthen their service potential and abilities; in this stage we might see growth in service skills and confidence solidified through interaction. Mastery of service skills in specific service areas and activities is the focus of Stage Three. In each service stage, young people focus on their academic studies as well as acquire service information and attitudes, and an array of interpersonal skills (communication, decision making, and advocacy).

Third, adolescence is a period of change and struggle. It can be anticipated that teenagers would have concerns about service learning. For themselves and others, young people's views about service learning might impede believing in its value. As we learned from Luis in the very beginning of this paper, many adolescents do not even think about service. When they do, they usually don't think of it in relation to themselves. In the majority of cases, they view service as something formal and distant. It is only for the very bright kids; it is something adults do and most teens don't. Even after accepting the idea that service is worthwhile, adolescents may not grasp the richness of the opportunities for learning through service. Understanding the concerns of adolescents as they participate in service learning will enrich adolescents' service learning participation.

Figure 1.1 Some Specific Needs of the Early Adolescent
(Ten to Fourteen Years Old)

1. Understanding of physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty. These are very personal and frequently troublesome matters. The child needs help in understanding himself during this period of change and in understanding the idea that it is healthy to grow and evolve.
2. Self-acceptance. The adolescent is beginning to resolve the conflict between what she is and what she wishes to be. She is beginning to establish life goals and make reasonable plans to attain those goals.
3. Acceptance of and by others. The adolescent is developing acceptable relationships with peers of both sexes, making friends, getting to know others, and understanding their differences. This includes realization of the effect he has on others as opposed to the effect he wants to have. He begins to understand the dynamics of peer pressure.
4. Acceptance, understanding, approval, and love from significant adults.
5. Knowledge of responsibility to others. The adolescent is learning not to be completely self-centered and is learning self-control.
6. Discovering how to make decisions, assume responsibility, use independent judgment, and recognize and accept the consequences of actions.
7. Figuring out how to deal with feelings. Adolescents become aware that others experience feelings similar to their own.

8. The beginnings of a personal value system.

Figure 1.2 Some Specific Needs of the Late Adolescent
(Fifteen to Nineteen Years Old)

1. Sexuality: The adolescent needs to understand that sexual feelings are normal, needs to know about her reproductive capabilities, has to learn how sexual expression relates to her other feelings, and has to understand the emotional issues surrounding sexual intimacy.
2. Status: The adolescent needs opportunities to gain a sense of competence in sports, academics, and social activities. He also must make more of his own decisions and then accept responsibility for those choices.
3. Sociality: Adolescents need opportunities to try out different roles as they continue to form their identities.
4. Values and Morality: As he or she forms the frame of reference through which to view the world, the adolescent needs to discuss opinions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings in an atmosphere of caring trust and acceptance with both peers and adults.

Figure 1.3 Locus of Control

Internal	"What I do will make a big difference in what happens."
External	"No matter what I do, I cannot make a difference."

Figure 1.4 Stages of Moral Development

Stage 1	Judgment is based solely on a person's own needs and perceptions.
Stage 2	Expectations of society and law are taken into account.
Stage 3	Judgments are based on abstract personal principles that are not necessarily defined by society's laws.

Figure 1.5 Three Levels of Moral Development

Level 1	Caring for the self	What is best for me?
Level 2	Caring for others	Am I doing what others expect of me?
Level 3	Caring for the self and others	Can I be responsible for myself and others at the same time?

Figure 1.6 Implications for Service Learning Programs and Research

1. Focus on how to meet needs
2. Define stages of service involvement
3. Investigate concerns

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